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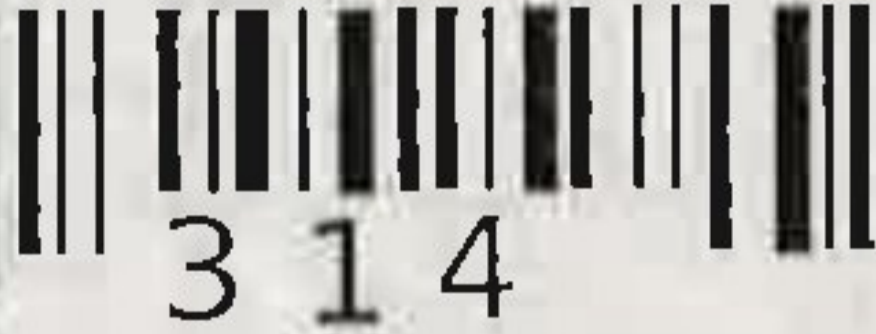
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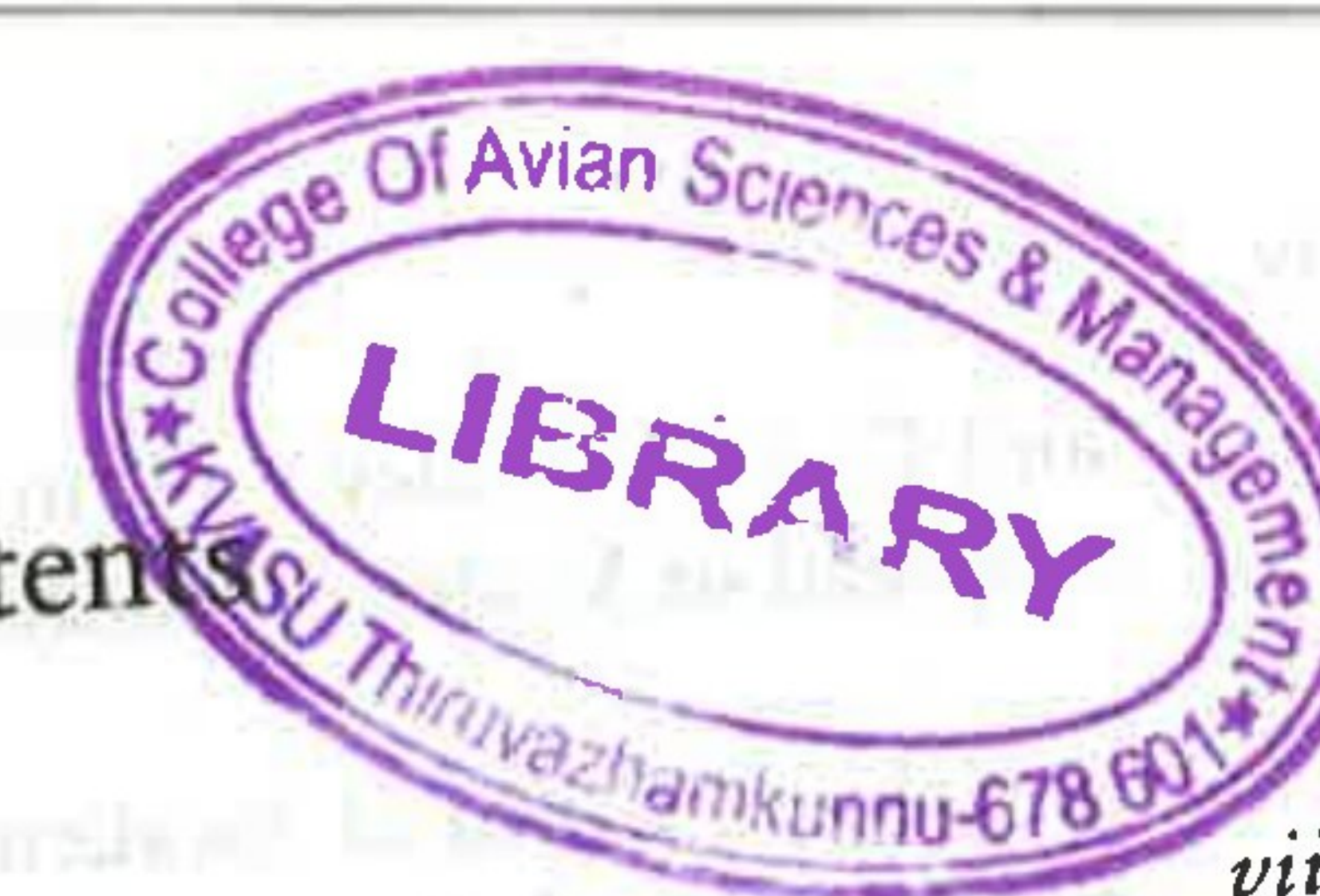
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Preface

The book presents an overview of the history of what was known as British India. The text is largely based on my own research on nationalism and colonialism in India, and on a large number of scholarly works published in this area.

Challenging and revising old imperialist and nationalist historiographies, the book moves away from the historico-political narrative to emphasise the mutual interrelationships between history, politics, economics, sociology and other related subjects. The book attempts to study wider social forces, movements, institutions and individuals in order to understand why certain events happened and analyses the consequences of such developments within a chronological framework.

The book examines the social, economic and political conditions in India in the eighteenth century in an attempt to explain why India fell prey to the British East India Company and later to the British Crown. It goes on to detail the political, administrative and economic impact of British rule in India. The economic exploitation of India through trade and investment is emphasised as the primary *raison d'être* of British rule. The foreign policies of British India, like the wars with Nepal and Afghanistan or the conquest of Burma also find mention in the book. The indigenous movements of various tribes and peasants across India are discussed. In the beginning, they rose and struggled in the traditional manner, resulting in major tribal and peasant uprisings throughout the country, which culminated in the revolt of 1857, though peasant and tribal uprisings continued even after. An effort has been made to juxtapose various strands of protest against British rule, so that the readers can develop their own opinion of the impact of British rule in the subcontinent.

I also examine the response of the Indian people to the emergence and growth of British rule. Realising the significance of the decline of Indian culture and society by the eighteenth century, the Indians organised several social and religious reform movements in the nineteenth century. This awakening in the nineteenth century not only adopted Western technology, like the printing press, to protest

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BIPAN CHANDRA

Bipan Chandra is one of the most eminent historians of modern Indian history. He is currently chairman of the National Book Trust. He is also Professor Emeritus, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and National Research Professor.

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